

CLAIMS

- 1 A method of constructing a 'hard' suitcase characterised by forming a shaped base portion (1) and a shaped lid portion (2) from a plastics material of such characteristic that the portions (1,2) retain their intended shape, and attaching to each of said portions the respective zipped portions (16A, 16B) of a zip fastener arrangement (16) by a stitching operation involving a securing thread (35).
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- 2 A method of constructing a frame less 'hard' suitcase characterised by the steps of forming a base portion (1) and a lid portion (2) from a material of such characteristic that the portions retain their formed shape, and attaching to each of said portions (1,2) the respective zipped portions (16A, 16B) of a zip fastener arrangement (16) by a stitching operation involving a securing thread (35).
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- 3 A method of constructing a frame less 'hard' curvilinear suitcase characterised by the steps of forming a tray like base portion (10) and a tray like lid portion (2) from a material of such characteristics that the base and lid portions retain their intended curvilinear shape, and attaching to the free edge regions (13,14) of the walls of said tray like portions (1,2) by a stitching operation using a thread (35) the respective fastener forming sections (16A, 16B) of a zip fastener arrangement (16) for enabling the base and lid portions (1,2) to be retained in a suitcase closed condition.
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- 4 A method of constructing a suitcase as claimed in claim 1,2 or 3, and characterised by providing a capability of increasing the storage volume of the case.
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- 5 A method as claimed in claim 4, characterised in that means, for enabling said increase in the closed volume of the suitcase includes a Zip fastener arrangement (25).

6. A method as claimed in claim 5, and characterised in that the zip fastener arrangement (25) is a two part Zip fastener arrangement of which a first Zip part (25B) is associated with the Zip fastener arrangement (16) involved with opening and closing of the case and a second Zip part (25A) is connected with the lid portion (2) of the case.

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7. A method as claimed in claim 6, and characterised by the provision of beading/piping between the zip part (25B) and the fastener (16)

8. A method as claimed in claim 6 or 7, and characterised in that a first section of the first Zip part (25A) stitched to the suitcase lid portion (2), and the second 10 section of the first Zip part (25A) is secured to the first zip section of the second zip fastener part (16B) whose second section is secured to the suitcase base portion (1).

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9. A method as claimed in claim 6, 7 or 8, and characterised in that the extent of closed volume increase is determined by the overall separation width of the 15 interconnected sections (25A, 25B) of the first and second Zip parts of the part Zip fastener arrangement (25) .

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10. A method as claimed in claim 9 and characterised in that a gusset forming strip (26) is provided between the adjoining sections of the first and second Zip fastener parts (25A, 25B) , and in which the overall increase in the closed volume 20 of the suitcase is determined by the width of the gusset.

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11. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 10 , and characterised by the step of covering in/encapsulating the edge regions of the zip fastener sections (16A, 25A) stitched to the base and lid portions (1,2) by a cover strip (30) that is secured to the associated base and lid portions (1,2) by the stitching operation 25 involved in securing the associated Zip fastener sections/strips to the base and lid sections of the case.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11 and characterised in that the cover strip (30) includes a length of a S cross-sectioned plastics/rubber strip into which is inserted the associated Zip fastener section (16A, 25A) so as to produce a layered formation including a layer of plastics/rubber material (33) immediately adjacent to the associated case edge portion, the associated section of a stiffening rib (14,14) and an outer layer (34) of plastics/rubber material.
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13. A suitcase construction including a base portion (10) and a lid portion (2) , and lid portions being formed of such material that the portions retain their intended shape whilst at the same time enabling the attachment by a stitching operation of at least one Zip fastener arrangement (16) for the purposes of enabling closure of the case.
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14. A suitcase as claimed in claim 13, and characterised in that two sets of floor engaging support members (23, 24) , there being a set being provided one to each of two transverse surfaces of the suitcase whereby the case can be stood on a support surface in one or the other of two orientations.
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15. A suitcase as claimed in claim 14, and characterised by means whereby the volume of the case is expandable.
- 16 A suitcase as claimed in Claim 15, characterised in that the expandability is achieved by providing a two part Zip fastener arrangement (25) of which a first Zip part (25B is associated with the Zip fastener arrangement (16) involved the closing of the case and of which a second Zip part (25A) is associated with the expandability of the case.
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- 17 A suitcase as claimed in claim 16, and characterised in that the second Zip part (25A) is interposed between the lid section (2) of the case and the section (16B) of the Zip fastener arrangement associated with the closure of the case.
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18. A suitcase as claimed in claim any one of claims 13 to 17, and characterised in that elements of one such set are provided upon the base portion (1) and incorporate wheels/rolls (19) whereby the case is rendered towable, and in which at least one other element (23) of this set is located on the lid portion (2), the arrangement being such as to provide a stable support for the case when not being towed.

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19. A suitcase as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 18, and characterised by that side of the base portion that is opposite to the wheels/rolls is provided with a case carrying handle (21) and a retractable towing means (20).